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Biosecurity for Livestock Auctions

General Guidelines

In order to ensure that biosecurity procedures are in place to allow for the rapid and accurate tracking of animals and livestock (origins and destinations) in the event of disease outbreak, and to prevent on-site contamination, the following procedures should be followed consistently:

- Ensure that all identification and record keeping requirements of the state/federal cooperative agreement and MA import requirements are met.
- Ensure that biosecurity gear (boots and coveralls) is worn by everyone in the animal handling areas.
- Ensure a clean, potable supply of water by ensuring that manure is stored away from the water source. An optimum distance is 100 feet from any water source. All trucks and any other source of contamination should be kept clear of the water supply or wellhead.
- Ensure that market employees capable of receiving and identifying animals/livestock are assigned to cover the doors through which animals/livestock enter and leave, for the entire time these doors are in use.
- Ensure that any and all drugs or chemicals are secured and locked up when not in use.
- Ensure that the auction has developed efficient standard operating procedures (SOP's) for handling manure and protecting the water supply from run-off and that all employees are trained in implementation of SOP's.
- Retain a copy of the driver's license of all transporters off-loading animals at the auction.

Guidelines for Cattle

- Auctions should maintain a form that records the date of arrival, transporter, owner and age/sex/breed/markings and official id and origin of each animal. Have the trucker sign the form.
- Record date of departure, destination and transporter of all animals leaving the auction.
- Require that all licensed dealers use their own back tags.

- Immediately upon arrival, mark all livestock originating from outside MA that arrive at the auction without health certificates with green stripes, visible when viewed from either side, to indicate their “slaughter only” status.
- Segregate all “slaughter only” animals to pens or areas not used for “return to farm animals”.
- Segregate and refuse entry to any downer animal. Inform state/federal personnel of their arrival.
- Segregate any sick, injured or incompatible animal.
- Any animals that ‘go down’ shall be humanely euthanized and/or be removed to a nearby slaughtering facility.
- Establish a plan with a rendering disposal company for the prompt removal and disposal of any dead animals.
- Establish SOP’s for cleaning and disinfecting areas where sick diseased or dead animals have been kept. Include all pens, ramps, equipment and vehicles, which were in contact with said animals.

Guidelines for Poultry

To prevent a possible transmission of Avian Influenza or other highly contagious disease, poultry dealers must also use biosecurity precautions at auction facilities. Avian influenza or other viruses can be introduced into these markets from infected birds or contaminated crates, personnel or vehicles. Once the virus is established at an auction facility, the movement of birds, crates, or vehicles and personnel from a contaminated market can spread the virus to other farms and markets. Therefore, the following protective measures should be taken at auctions to prevent the possible spread of poultry disease:

- Replace wooden crates with plastic or metal, whenever possible, for easier and more thorough cleaning.
- Keep scales and floors clean of manure, feathers, and other debris.
- Drivers should be advised to clean and disinfect all equipment, crates, and vehicles before returning them to the farm.
- Keep incoming poultry separate from unsold birds, especially if birds are from different lots.
- For more specific information about biosecurity and cleaning and disinfection practices, contact the MA Department of Agricultural Resources.

Guidelines for Auction Visitors

Persons attending auctions can be categorized as low, moderate or high risk for the transmission of disease.

Low-risk visitors include those from urban areas or those who have had no livestock contact. Although these visitors present very little risk of introducing disease to the farm, some precautions might include:

1. Not allowing visitors to enter pens, walk through feed alleys, or touch animals unless necessary.
2. Provide disposable boots if visitors must enter the pens where animals are kept or moved through. This not only reduces the disease risk for your animals but also helps prevent guests from contaminating their clothing with germs from your facility.
3. Do not allow visitors to eat or smoke if they are having physical contact with animals.
4. Provide a plastic bag or trash receptacle for collection of disposable boots.

Moderate risk visitors include those people who routinely visit farms, but who have little or no actual contact with animals. Salesmen, feed and fuel delivery drivers, and maintenance workers are examples of this group. They should be expected to observe the same precautions as stated earlier and in addition:

5. They should wear clean coveralls and boots if there is any contact with feed, animals, soil, or manure.
6. Any sampling equipment should be properly cleaned and disinfected between uses.
7. Dirty boots should be cleaned and disinfected, and coveralls should be removed and placed in a clean plastic bag or container before re-entering any vehicle.

High-risk visitors are those people who come into direct contact with livestock in their work and would include farmers, veterinarians and livestock haulers. These people typically have direct contact with animals and their bodily discharges. In addition to the precautions listed earlier, other recommendations include:

8. Ensuring that Vehicles are clean and free of visible manure on the tires and wheel wells.
9. Vehicle interiors should be easily cleanable and kept clean.
10. Livestock truck beds and trailers should be clean and dry, and preferably disinfected, before arrival at the auction.
11. The auction should either supply facilities to clean and disinfect trucks or require that trucks carry the equipment necessary to perform such cleaning and disinfection according to standard SOP's.